University of Venda

Creating Future Leaders

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, SOCIAL SCIENCES & EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

ART FOR YOUNG CHILDREN (EAT4141)

LECTURER: DR MATODZI SIKHWARI

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OVERVIEW

Introduction to the module

Introduction to the Module: Art for Young Children (EAT4541)

Welcome to **Art for Young Children (EAT4541)**! This module is designed to equip you, as future teachers, with the knowledge and skills to integrate art into early childhood education effectively. Art plays a crucial role in young children's development, fostering creativity, self-expression, and holistic growth. Throughout this module, you will explore the developmental significance of art and practical strategies for implementing an effective early childhood art program.

Module Overview

The module is divided into two main sections:

A. Art and the Development of the Young Child

This section examines how art contributes to various aspects of a child's growth:

- **Art and Physical-Mental Growth** – Understanding how artistic activities support fine motor skills, cognitive abilities, and sensory development.
- **Art and Social-Emotional Growth** – Exploring how art fosters emotional expression, social interaction, and confidence in young learners.
- **Developmental Levels and Art** – Identifying how children's artistic abilities progress with age and how to provide age-appropriate art experiences.

B. The Early Childhood Art Program

This section focuses on the practical aspects of designing and implementing an art program for young children:

- **Program Basics** – Learning about essential goals, setting up an engaging art space, selecting appropriate materials, and applying effective teaching strategies.
- **Two-Dimensional Activities** – Exploring activities such as drawing, painting, and collage-making.
- **Three-Dimensional Activities** – Engaging children in sculpture, clay modeling, and other hands-on artistic experiences.

By the end of this module, you will have a deeper understanding of how art supports early childhood development and gains practical strategies for integrating creative activities into your teaching. This knowledge will prepare you to foster a rich and inspiring artistic environment for young learners.

Let's embark on this creative journey together!

PRESCRIBED BOOK

Creative Activities for Young Children by Mary Mayesky

CONTACT DETAILS OF THE LECTURER

Dr Matodzi Sikhwari

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E-mail:matodzi.sikhwari@univen.ac.za

Office No.GF25 (Education Building

Class Time: To be announced

WORKING PROCEDURES IN CLASS

It is essential to come to class prepared for lectures because it promotes student involvement and participation.

The lecturer will explain the principles to you, but it is your responsibility to understand the material.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Attendance of classes is important to ensure success in your studies. It allows students to discuss any problems they might encounter with the assignment or the module's content. Furthermore, it serves as a platform to engage in discussions with the lecturer and other students regarding the assignment, examination and other relevant issues in relation to the module. Students must come prepared to class to ensure effective support from the lecturer.

All classes are compulsory

You should always be punctual in attending classes.

A register of attendance will be signed in every class and be used as part of the assessment.

ASSESSMENT

TESTS AND OTHER ASSESSMENT

During the semester, you will write tests and assignments to determine if you have attained the prescribed goals and understood the material.

Suppose you are absent from class tests or another evaluation session or fail to submit an assignment before or on the due date. In that case, you will receive a zero mark for that assessment unless you submit a *medical certificate within three (3)* working days of the missed evaluation.

No more than 1-semester test may be missed.

Assignments:

An assignment is part of the evaluation process.

Writing the assignments:

Before you start writing your assignment answer, you must plan how you will turn rough notes into an objective, systematic, and cohesive discussion. The following suggestions are helpful:

Read the assignment question more than once and ensure you understand what is required of you.

Look at the headings, subheadings, and other details you wrote in your notes and consider whether these will help you compile an answer. If not, you must return to your sources for more information.

Work out a rough plan or framework. Each assignment has three main sections: an introduction, the main discussion, and a conclusion.

Read through your notes carefully. You will now fill the spaces under these three sections by transferring only the main points in your notes onto this planning sheet.

To work out a framework for your main discussion, start placing headings and subheadings from your notes logically.

In this module, you will write:

Two assignments will be written, one individual and one group assignment. You will be expected to visit the library and read the articles regarding policy thus CAPS (Home Language) and the reading list provided.

Assignments are compulsory. Make sure that you do not submit identical assignments. You can discuss as a group, but the final product should be your own. You are encouraged to type the assignment on one side of a page to make marking easier and pages must be numbered.

Please ensure that the following information is provided on the front cover of your assignment:

Name/names if it is a group assignment

Student number

Name of your lecturer

Name of the module: Tshivenda/Xitsonga/Sepedi/SiSwati Home Language

Module Code : EAT4141

Tests: At least two tests will be written based on the work done in class.

Year mark: The two assignments and tests will be averaged to give you a predicate/examination entry mark.

You will also engage yourself in the activities provided. Discuss with your group and relate them to the classroom situation.

You will be assessed in the following manner:

1. Written work 100%

Assignments: 1= 40%

Baseline Test 1= 10%

Tests: 1= 50%

=60%

Examination: 40%

ASSIGNMENTS

The **DOS** and **DON'TS** FOR ASSIGNMENTS:

I would like to discourage late submission of assignments as this causes confusion strongly.

If, for valid reasons, you are unable to attend the class, please send your work to someone you can rely on or make sure you submit it before the closing date.

I encourage group work, but the final writing of the assignment must be based on your ideas (your original work).

Photocopies are not accepted. I need originals either typed or handwritten with your handwriting.

Marks will be shared for identical assignments, meaning if the assignment is worth 50%, the person who has submitted the same assignment as yours will obtain 25% and you will also get 25% of the mark obtained. The same will apply for three or four people who have identical assignments, meaning the final mark will be divided by three or four respectively.

EXAMINATIONS

The examination will consist of one 3-hour paper.

Examination questions are not only aimed at assessing factual knowledge of the module's content but also the ability to apply the knowledge in practical situations.

Make sure you know each unit's outcomes and exercises, as most of the examination questions will come from the exercises and outcomes.

Make sure you know the meaning of the action verbs in the study guide to know what is expected of you when answering examination questions.

Your examination answers must be presented logically and systematically. Paragraphs and subsections should be clearly numbered and provided with headings.

Take note of the way the question is asked. Before you answer the question, make sure you understand the question. Do not guess!

Take note of the number of marks awarded to the question.

Do not try to spot! Go through all the work covered in class on your own and through group work.

Certain keywords are used in questions to indicate how a question must be answered. If the question reads ‘name and describe’, you must give a complete explanation. If the question states “name”, then you must only give the answer and not explain. If the question states that you must explain in a sketch”, then you must give both the sketch and an explanation. A definition is an exact description of a specific concept as it stands in your textbook or notes.

STUDENTS' ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning (CHETL) offers services to students to address the challenges facing students in achieving the expected outcomes of teaching and learning in higher education.

Staff Academic Support & Student Academic Support/development programmes

Contact details: F Ravhuhali 015 962 8116

Office no E07 Old Education Building

Career development, counselling and therapy services

Contact details:

Dr Refilwe Pila-Nemutandani 015 962 8156

Office no 35 C-block Building

Services for students with disabilities

Contact details: 015 962 8018

Office no 17 Disability Unit Building

E-learning and LMS

Contact details: Mr Willie Xazela 015962 8894

Office No G005 Old Admin

Thank you and good luck with your studies.

Module lecturer: Dr Matodzi Sikhwari

Title of Module	**Art for Young Children**
Module Code	**EAT 4541**
Type	**Pedagogic Learning: General pedagogic knowledge**
Credit Value	**18**
Module Level (NQF)	**7**
Notional Hours	**180**
Aims	The module is designed to train students to understand the structure of Art Education for young children and develop skills to encourage learners to become willing to express their creative abilities.
Core Competencies This module sets out to assist students to:	This module sets out to assist students to demonstrate ability to: • Acquire and apply knowledge and understanding of the content, context, and/ or purpose of art in the Foundation Phase. • This module sets out to assist students to determine the meaning of key terms and other domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a specific words and phrases as they are used in specific scientific or technical context relevant to Grades R-3 topics. • Identify and discuss different developmental levels of art in the Foundation Phase. • Describe and discuss programme basics in early childhood programme • Differentiate, discuss and evaluate two-dimensional and three-dimensional activities in the Foundation Phase. • Understand ɵ how to create and critique personal artwork in the Foundation Phase. • Create variety of art forms (e.g. picture making/drawing; print making). • Develop art activities for specific ages in the Foundation Phase.
Content	• Introduction to Art for young Children and its importance to Foundation Phase educators. • Teaching Art and the Development of the Young Child in the Foundation Phase • Art and physical-mental growth • Art and physical (motor) development • Art and mental development • Art and the total program. • Teaching Art and socio-emotional growth to young child focus on the following headings: o Self-concept and self-acceptance. o Child-to-child relationships o Child-to-teacher relationships

	○ Child-to-group relationships ○ Self-competence. ○ Developmental levels of art. • Different Early Childhood Art Programme that develop young child in the Foundation Phase • Programme basics: Goals; setting up; materials; and strategies • Two dimensional activities namely picture making, print making and collage • Three-dimensional activities, namely Modelling, Assemblage, cardboard construction and woodworking • Adaptations for children with special needs in Art education
Teaching and learning strategies	A combination of the following teaching and learning activities will be employed depending on topic, grade, learning styles and individual differences of students: • Lecture exposition, • class and group discussions, • question and answer, • tutorials and mentorship, • short guided research projects/assignments, • oral and/or written feedback, • PowerPoint presentations and demonstrations, • Cooperative learning, • Inquiry-based instruction.
Assessment Methods and Weighting	Learners will be assessed as follows: • Coursework: Assignments, tests, projects etc : 60% • Written Examination or examination equivalent : 40% **Total : 100%**
Assessment Criteria for the module learning outcomes **Examples:** Written works, oral presentations, written assignments, projects, group work, written examinations, exam equivalent submissions, portfolio, demonstrations or any other assessed work relevant for the module and in line with university policy on assessment	Both formative and summative assessment methods are employed in order to achieve the expected exit level outcomes for the degree programme as outlined below: • **Formative assessment**: The scheme of work in formative assessment includes assignments based on the learning material and learners are given feedback. The process is continuous and focuses on smaller sections of the programme work and learning outcomes. Formative assessment or coursework, which can comprise of tests, assignments, projects, presentations and portfolios contributes 60% of the final mark. • **Summative assessment**: Examinations or equivalent assessment. Summative assessment also tests the learner's ability to manage and integrate a large body of knowledge to achieve the stated outcomes of a module and contributes 40% of the final mark.

	Student teachers will be assessed in the module on the basis of their ability to: • Understand the scope of Art Education and apply the knowledge of art concepts and phrases and their roles in the teaching of Art in the Foundation Phase. • Identify and discuss basic materials and equipments used in early childhood art programme. • Discuss programme basics (goals, setting up, materials and strategies) for childhood art programme. • List, differentiate and discuss two-dimensional and three-dimensional activities for children in the Foundation Phase. • Manage and organize various tools, materials, techniques and strategies in art programme. • Explain the relationship between art and the development of the young child. • Debate and judge the importance of teaching art in the Foundation Phase. • Describe developmental levels of art in the Foundation Phase.
Reading Lists	• Bedford, B.V. (1963). *Exploring Finger Paint*. Worcester MA: Davis Publication. • Cox-Bishop, M. (2005). *The pictorial World of the Child*. New York: Cambridge University Press. • Epstein, A.S. (2009). *You, me and us: Social learning in preschool*. Ypsilanti, MI: High scope Educational Research Foundation. • Franklin, R. (2007). Drawing inside the box. *School Arts Journal,* 107(8): 12-13. • Gallaghue, D. & Ozmun, J. (2000). *Understanding motor development: Infants, Children, Adolecents, Adults (4th Ed.)*. New York: McGraw Hill. • Gallo, F., Golomb, C., & Barroso, A. (2003). Compositional Strategies in drawing: The effects of two and three-dimensional media. *Visual Arts Research,* 28(1),: 2-23. • Golomb, C. (2004). Sculpture: Representational development in Three-dimensional medium. In E. Eisner & M. Day (Eds), *Handbook of Research and Policy in Art Education* (pp. 329-358). Mahwah, N.J: Erlbaum. • Lowenfeld, V. & Brittain, W.L. (1987). *Creative and mental growth of the child (8th Ed.)*. New York: MacMillan. • Mayesky, M. (2012). *Creative Activities for Young Children.* United Kingdom: Wadsworth Cengage Learning. • Thompson, S.C. (2005). *Children as illustrators: Making meaning through art and language*. Washing DC: NAEYC.

Unit 1: ART AND PHYSICAL-MENTAL GROWTH

1.1 Introduction

Art is an integral part of early childhood development, playing a crucial role in children's holistic growth. Artistic activities foster creativity while enhancing physical (motor) and mental (cognitive) development. The developmental benefits of art extend beyond mere creative expression, influencing motor coordination, problem-solving skills, sensory awareness, and emotional intelligence (Edwards, 2019).

Understanding how art supports physical and mental development provides educators and caregivers with insights into fostering a rich learning environment that nurtures children’s abilities. This unit explores the relationship between art and these developmental domains, emphasising the significance of incorporating art-based activities in early childhood education.

1.2 Key Concepts

a. Physical Development

This refers to the gradual improvement of bodily capabilities, encompassing both gross-motor skills (large-muscle movements) and fine-motor skills (small-muscle movements). Gross-motor skills involve actions such as running, jumping, and balancing. In contrast, fine-motor skills involve dexterity and control in small muscle movements, such as grasping a crayon, cutting with scissors, or threading beads.

b. Mental Development

Mental development, also referred to as cognitive development, encompasses how children acquire, process, and apply knowledge. It includes problem-solving, memory, reasoning, and decision-making. Art activities stimulate cognitive growth by encouraging children to explore, experiment, and think critically about their creative choices (Gandini, 2022).

1.3 Art and Physical (Motor) Development

Art plays a crucial role in children's physical and motor development by strengthening both large and small muscle groups, improving hand-eye coordination, and laying the foundation for essential academic skills. Through various artistic activities, children refine their motor skills in a structured and enjoyable way, supporting their overall physical growth and preparing them for future learning experiences.

i. Patterns of Development

Children's physical development follows predictable patterns, directly impacting their ability to engage in artistic activities. These patterns include:

- **Large-to-Small Muscle Development (Gross-to-Fine Motor Development):** Large muscle groups, such as those in the neck, trunk, arms, and legs, develop before smaller muscles in the fingers and hands. This explains why young children learn gross-motor skills (e.g., walking, jumping, or throwing) before they can perform fine-motor tasks like drawing, writing, or using scissors. Artistic activities should align with this natural progression, beginning with broad, sweeping movements before introducing tasks requiring precision.
- **Head-to-Toe Development (Cephalocaudal Trend):** Motor control develops from the head downward. Infants first gain control of their head and neck, followed by their shoulders, arms, and, later, their hands and fingers. This pattern influences the way children interact with art materials; for example, toddlers may enjoy large-scale, whole-arm painting before they develop the ability to hold a crayon or pencil correctly.
- **Inside-to-Outside Development (Proximodistal Trend):** Motor control develops from the body's centre outward. Children first gain control over their core muscles (trunk and shoulders) before refining movements in their arms, hands, and fingers. This is why young children can engage in broad arm movements, such as waving or swiping paint across a surface, before they develop the fine motor control necessary for intricate details in artwork.

Understanding these developmental patterns allows educators to select appropriate art activities that support children's motor growth and enhance their creative expression.

ii. Large-Muscle Development

Gross-motor activities in art encourage using large muscle groups, strengthening children's coordination, endurance, and overall body control. Some art-based activities that support large-muscle development include:

- **Painting on easels:** Encourages upper-body movement, coordination, and shoulder stability, as children use broad strokes to apply paint.
- **Dance and movement-based art forms:** Activities like rhythm-based movement, dramatic play, and creative dance help children develop balance, spatial awareness, and core strength.
- **Sculpting with clay or large materials:** Moulding and shaping large pieces of clay or dough builds hand and wrist strength while engaging muscles in the arms and shoulders.
- **Chalk drawing on sidewalks or large paper:** Promotes gross-motor movement by encouraging children to use their arms and upper body to create big, sweeping designs.

By incorporating such activities, educators and caregivers provide children with opportunities to refine their gross-motor skills while engaging in creative expression.

iii. Small-Muscle Development

Fine-motor skills are essential for tasks that require precision and dexterity. Art activities help strengthen the small muscles in children’s hands and fingers, improving their ability to control movements. Some fine-motor activities that enhance small-muscle development include:

- **Drawing and colouring:** Helps children develop grip strength, wrist control, and hand stability, all of which are essential for writing readiness.
- **Cutting and pasting:** Enhances scissor skills and hand coordination, reinforcing bilateral hand use (coordinating both hands together).

- **Weaving, beading, and threading:** These activities refine pincer grasp and finger strength, improving children's ability to precisely manipulate small objects.
- **Finger painting and stamping:** Strengthens finger control and sensory-motor coordination while allowing children to experiment with texture and colour.

Children gradually develop the fine-motor skills necessary for handwriting, self-care tasks (such as buttoning shirts or tying shoelaces), and other daily functions by engaging in these activities.

iv. Large- and Small-Motor Activities

A well-rounded art program integrates both gross- and fine-motor activities to ensure balanced development. Offering diverse materials such as crayons, markers, paints, scissors, clay, and textiles allows children to engage different muscle groups and progress naturally in their motor skills.

For example:

- A painting activity may start with broad strokes using a brush (gross-motor) and transition to smaller, detailed strokes (fine-motor).
- Clay modelling may begin with rolling and pounding (gross-motor) before shifting to shaping and detailing (fine-motor).
- Large paper mural creation may involve both broad movements (gross-motor) and intricate elements such as adding small details with a brush (fine-motor).

By structuring activities involving both motor development types, educators provide a holistic approach that supports children’s physical, cognitive, and creative growth.

v. Hand-Eye Coordination

Hand-eye coordination refers to synchronizing visual information with precise hand movements. Strong hand-eye coordination is necessary for academic tasks such as writing, reading, and using tools effectively. Art activities that enhance hand-eye coordination include:

- **Painting within lines:** Encourages controlled brush or crayon movements.
- **Tearing and pasting paper into shapes:** Requires children to judge size and placement while coordinating hand movements visually.
- **Tracing and drawing simple patterns:** Strengthens visual tracking skills, an essential skill for reading and writing.
- **Moulding and shaping clay:** Enhances spatial awareness and strengthens the connection between visual input and fine-motor actions.

Developing strong hand-eye coordination through artistic activities ensures children build the foundational skills necessary for academic success.

vi. Art Activities and Reading Readiness

Art activities play a significant role in preparing children for literacy development. Through fine-motor engagement and visual processing, artistic tasks contribute to early reading skills in the following ways:

- **Left-to-right orientation:** Many art activities (such as drawing, tracing, and writing) reinforce the left-to-right movement necessary for reading and writing.
- **Recognition of shapes and patterns:** Identifying and replicating shapes in art helps children distinguish letters, which is crucial for letter recognition and phonics.
- **Grip strength and pencil control:** Strengthening hand muscles through drawing, colouring, and cutting supports a proper writing grip, essential for handwriting development.
- **Visual tracking:** Following lines while drawing or tracing enhances eye movement control, which is necessary for fluent reading.

By integrating structured art experiences, educators help children build the foundational skills for literacy, ensuring smoother transitions into reading and writing.

Art is more than just a means of creative expression; it is an essential tool for physical development in early childhood. By engaging in artistic activities that support both gross- and fine-motor skills, children develop coordination, strength, and precision that benefit their overall growth. Additionally, art plays a key role in developing academic

skills such as reading and writing, making it a fundamental component of early childhood education. Providing a variety of art experiences that align with children's developmental stages ensures they receive the support they need to build strong motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and pre-literacy skills.

1.4 Art and Mental Development

Art plays a significant role in shaping children's cognitive abilities, including thinking skills, problem-solving, sensory exploration, and language development. Engaging in artistic activities helps children build creativity, reasoning, and communication skills while fostering an understanding of abstract concepts.

i. Art and Thinking Skills

Art encourages children to think critically and make independent decisions about colours, materials, and artistic techniques. It enhances cognitive flexibility by allowing them to explore multiple possibilities and perspectives. Through artistic expression, children develop problem-solving skills, creativity, and divergent thinking. Activities that stimulate thinking skills include:

- **Experimenting with colour mixing:** Understanding how colours blend fosters logical reasoning and prediction.
- **Creating 3D structures with recyclable materials:** Promotes spatial reasoning, problem-solving, and innovation.
- **Interpreting abstract art forms:** Encourages children to analyse and assign meaning to different artistic expressions, enhancing visual literacy.

ii. Art and Sensorimotor Development

Sensorimotor learning is a key stage in Piaget's theory of cognitive development, where children acquire knowledge through sensory experiences and motor activities. Art provides hands-on learning opportunities that allow children to manipulate materials, enhancing both their cognitive and physical development. Through

engaging in artistic processes, children strengthen their understanding of cause and effect, develop fine-motor coordination, and refine their sensory perceptions.

iii. Sensorimotor Learning in Art

Artistic activities integrate multiple senses, promoting hands-on exploration and cognitive growth. Examples of sensorimotor activities in art include:

- **Clay modelling:** Encourages tactile stimulation, helping children understand textures, pressure, and shape formation.
- **Finger painting:** Enhances sensory exploration and allows children to experiment with movement, pressure, and blending colours.
- **Sand and water play:** Helps develop fine-motor control, hand strength, and early problem-solving abilities as children manipulate materials.

iv. Creative Arts and the Senses

Different sensory experiences contribute to a child's cognitive and artistic development. By engaging the senses, children develop a deeper understanding of the world around them. Artistic activities stimulate various sensory modalities, such as:

- **Touch:** Helps children explore texture concepts (e.g., soft, rough, smooth, grainy).
- **Sight:** Assists in recognising colours, sizes, spatial relationships, and depth perception.
- **Smell:** Engages memory and sensory differentiation (e.g., using scented markers, clay, or natural materials).

Teachers and caregivers can enhance sensory learning by incorporating a variety of materials and encouraging discussions about sensory experiences in art.

v. Vocabulary and Art

Art fosters language development by expanding children's descriptive vocabulary. When children engage in artistic activities, they naturally describe their work, ask

questions, and communicate ideas. Teachers and caregivers can support language acquisition by encouraging discussions about:

- **Size:** Large, tiny, wide, narrow
- **Shape:** Round, angular, curvy
- **Texture:** Rough, smooth, grainy, bumpy
- **Colour and tone:** Bright, pale, dark, vibrant

By engaging in conversations about their artwork, children develop essential communication skills, express their thoughts more effectively, and build confidence in verbal self-expression. According to Kolbe (2021), art-based discussions help children form meaningful connections between language and visual representation, enhancing overall literacy development.

1.5 Conclusion

Art is more than a creative outlet; it is an essential tool for enhancing physical and mental development in early childhood. By engaging in artistic activities, children refine their motor skills, develop hand-eye coordination, strengthen problem-solving abilities, and expand their cognitive and linguistic capacities.

A well-structured art program fosters holistic growth, equipping children with essential developmental skills that support their academic readiness and overall well-being.

UNIT 2: ART AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL GROWTH

Social-emotional growth encompasses two primary dimensions: emotional development, which refers to a child's feelings, and social development, which pertains to a child's ability to function as a group member. This unit explores four key areas that contribute to social-emotional development through art: (1) self-concept and self-acceptance, (2) child-to-child relationships, (3) child-to-teacher relationships, and (4) child-to-group relationships.

2.1 Self-Concept and Self-Acceptance

Understanding Self-Concept in Early Childhood

Self-concept refers to a child's awareness of their personal characteristics, including physical appearance, skills, abilities, and personality traits, as well as how these attributes compare to those of others (Santrock, 2021). It is shaped by social interactions, experiences, and feedback from caregivers, teachers, and peers. A child's developing self-concept influences their confidence, motivation, and willingness to engage in new experiences.

Self-concept is multidimensional and evolves as children gain awareness of themselves in relation to their environment. It includes:

- **Physical self-awareness:** Recognising one's body, abilities, and physical attributes.
- **Cognitive self-awareness:** Understanding personal strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement.
- **Social self-awareness:** Comparing oneself to others and forming relationships based on social identity.

Self-Acceptance and Self-Esteem Development

Self-acceptance is a fundamental component of self-concept, reflecting a child's ability to embrace their individuality, strengths, and limitations without self-judgment. Rooted in Maslow's (1943) theory of self-actualisation, self-acceptance emerges when

children feel supported and valued for who they are, rather than being pressured to meet unrealistic expectations.

A positive self-concept fosters:

- **Higher self-esteem:** Confidence in one's abilities and personal worth.
- **Resilience:** The ability to handle challenges and setbacks with a positive outlook.
- **Intrinsic motivation:** The desire to learn and explore without fear of failure.

Conversely, a negative self-concept may lead to self-doubt, low motivation, and avoidance of challenges. Therefore, creating an inclusive and nurturing environment is crucial in helping children build a strong sense of self.

The Role of Art in Self-Acceptance

Art plays a powerful role in nurturing self-acceptance by allowing children to express their emotions, ideas, and unique perspectives in a non-judgmental way. Through artistic activities, children develop a sense of identity, autonomy, and self-confidence (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987).

Ways Art Encourages Self-Acceptance:

- **Creative Expression:** Art provides a medium for children to externalise thoughts and emotions, helping them process their feelings in a safe and constructive way.
- **Non-Competitive Atmosphere:** Unlike some academic tasks, art does not have a "right" or "wrong" outcome, allowing children to create without fear of failure.
- **Recognition and Validation:** When children receive positive feedback about their artwork, they gain confidence in their abilities and feel valued for their unique contributions.
- **Exploration of Identity:** Art enables children to represent their personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, and aspirations, strengthening their sense of self.

For instance, when a child paints a self-portrait or creates a collage representing their family, they develop a deeper understanding of their identity. If their artistic efforts are met with encouragement, they feel proud of their work, reinforcing self-acceptance.

Strategies for Encouraging Self-Acceptance Through Art

Teachers and caregivers play a critical role in fostering self-acceptance by designing inclusive and supportive art experiences. The following strategies help create an environment where all children feel valued and capable:

1. **Accept children at their current developmental level.**

-Recognise that artistic abilities develop at different rates.

-Avoid comparisons between children's artwork.

2. **Create a comfortable environment suitable for the children's age and needs.**

-Provide a safe, welcoming space that encourages self-expression.

-Allow children to experiment freely with art materials.

3. **Provide materials and activities appropriate for various skill levels.**

-Offer a range of art supplies (e.g., large brushes for younger children, detailed tools for older ones).

-Ensure that children of different developmental stages can participate successfully.

4. **Offer creative tasks that children can complete independently.**

-Promote autonomy by letting children make decisions about their artistic creations.

-Avoid excessive guidance that limits creativity.

5. **Encourage children to discuss their artwork to build self-confidence and narrative skills.**

-Ask open-ended questions like:

- “What inspired you to use these colours?”
- “Can you tell me about your drawing?”

-Help children articulate their thoughts and feelings through their art.

6. **Foster a culture of appreciation where children celebrate each other’s artistic expressions.**

-Create an art display area where children’s work is showcased.

-Encourage peer appreciation by having children describe what they like about each other’s artwork.

By implementing these strategies, educators can help children embrace their individuality and develop a positive self-image, reinforcing their self-worth through artistic expression (Gadsden, 2017).

2.2 Child-to-Child Relationships

Developing positive relationships with peers is an essential aspect of early childhood development. Before children can fully accept others, they must develop self-acceptance, which lays the foundation for empathy, cooperation, and social engagement. Early childhood programs provide structured and unstructured opportunities for children to interact with peers, and art activities serve as a powerful medium for socialisation and relationship-building (Eckhoff, 2008). Through collaborative art experiences, children learn to communicate, share ideas, and respect different perspectives, which strengthens their interpersonal skills and social bonds.

2.2.1 Sharing Ideas and Opinions Through Art

Art naturally encourages children to express their thoughts, share creative ideas, and engage in discussions about their work and that of their peers. These interactions help

children understand that people have different viewpoints while still maintaining friendships and mutual respect (Goncu & Gaskins, 2007).

Examples of Sharing Ideas Through Art:

- A child explaining the meaning behind their drawing and receiving feedback from peers.
- Group discussions about colour choices, shapes, and artistic themes, promoting cognitive and social development.
- Collaborative storytelling through art, where each child contributes to a group drawing or painting, fostering teamwork and collective creativity.

By participating in peer discussions about art, children develop critical thinking, listening, and verbal communication skills, which are essential for their overall cognitive and emotional growth.

Benefits of Peer Interactions in Art Activities:

- **Modeling behavior and achievement:** Children observe and learn from each other's creativity and problem-solving approaches.
- **Peer validation and encouragement:** Positive reinforcement from friends boosts confidence and motivation.
- **Development of teamwork skills:** Working together on art projects teaches collaboration, patience, and active listening.
- **Navigating social roles and expectations:** Children learn how to take on leadership and supportive roles in a group setting.
- **Increased empathy and understanding:** Seeing a peer's artistic expression helps children appreciate different emotions and experiences.

2.2.2 Social Competence Development Through Art

Social competence refers to a child's ability to interact effectively with others and form positive relationships while managing social challenges. Art provides a structured yet open-ended environment where children can practice essential social skills, such as sharing, taking turns, cooperating, and resolving conflicts (Bodrova & Leong, 2019).

Key Aspects of Social Competence in Art:

1. **Expression of Feelings:**
    - Art serves as a non-verbal communication tool, allowing children to express emotions that may be difficult to articulate in words (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987).
    - Drawing, painting, or sculpting can help children process feelings such as happiness, frustration, or excitement, which contributes to emotional intelligence.
2. **Cooperation and Collaboration:**
    - Group art projects, such as mural painting, sculpture building, or collage creation, teach children to work together towards a common goal.
    - Through collaboration, children learn to negotiate roles, delegate tasks, and appreciate different artistic contributions.
3. **Conflict Resolution and Problem-Solving:**
    - Disagreements may arise during collaborative art projects, such as choosing colours or deciding who paints which section.
    - These moments provide opportunities for children to practice problem-solving, compromise, and respectful communication.
4. **Empathy and Perspective-Taking:**
    - When children view and discuss a peer's artwork, they develop an appreciation for different perspectives, experiences, and emotions.
    - Encouraging children to explain their artistic choices fosters understanding and mutual respect.

Examples of Art Activities That Enhance Social Competence:

- **Mural Painting:** Each child contributes a section, requiring teamwork, discussion, and cooperation.
- **Group Sculpture Projects:** Children decide on materials, shapes, and themes together, practising negotiation and leadership skills.
- **Partner Drawing Games:** One child starts a drawing, and another finishes it, promoting turn-taking and creative collaboration.
- **Role-Playing with Art:** Creating puppets or masks for a group performance helps children engage in imaginative social interactions.

By integrating collaborative art experiences into early childhood education, teachers and caregivers can strengthen peer relationships, improve social competence, and nurture a sense of community among young learners.

2.3 Child-to-Teacher Relationships

The teacher plays a pivotal role in shaping children's self-perception, confidence, and attitudes toward learning. In early childhood art programs, teachers are not only facilitators of artistic skills but also mentors who provide emotional support and encouragement (Edwards, 2014). A teacher’s ability to create a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment greatly influences how children view themselves and engage in the learning process.

2.3.1 Building Rapport Through Art

Developing a warm, supportive relationship between teacher and child enhances both learning and emotional security. When children feel valued and respected, they are more likely to freely express their ideas and emotions (Pianta et al., 2008). Art provides an ideal medium for building strong teacher-child connections because it allows for open-ended exploration and personal expression without fear of failure.

Key Strategies for Strengthening Teacher-Child Relationships:

- **Make children feel valued and special:** Acknowledge their contributions and celebrate their artistic efforts.
- **Maintain eye contact and address children by name:** This fosters a sense of belonging and importance.
- **Reinforce children's efforts and accomplishments:** Praise their creativity rather than focusing on technical skills.
- **Actively listen and engage in conversations:** Ask open-ended questions about their artwork to show genuine interest.
- **Use a respectful and encouraging tone:** Provide constructive feedback that boosts confidence.

- **Provide individualized feedback on children's artistic progress:** Tailor support to each child's developmental level.

2.3.2 Encouraging Acceptance and Individuality

Teachers must **recognize and respect the developmental differences** among children. A supportive **art environment** enables children to explore their **unique creative styles** without fear of judgment, promoting **self-acceptance and confidence** (Gadsden, 2017).

Ways to Foster Individuality in Art:

- **Offer diverse materials and techniques** to accommodate different learning preferences.
- **Encourage experimentation and self-expression** rather than focusing on traditional standards of "good art."
- **Respect children's creative choices** without imposing strict guidelines or expectations.
- **Use art discussions to highlight uniqueness**, reinforcing that each child's artistic perspective is valuable.

By embracing individual creativity, teachers help children develop a positive self-identity, which is fundamental to personal growth and social development.

2.4 Child-to-Group Relationships

Participation in group art activities fosters essential social and emotional skills, such as cooperation, leadership, empathy, and respect for others' ideas. Through collaborative artistic experiences, children learn how to work together, appreciate different perspectives, and navigate group dynamics (Bodrova & Leong, 2019).

2.4.1 The Role of Group Art Activities in Social Development

Group-based artistic experiences allow children to:

- **Develop teamwork skills** by contributing to a collective creative effort.

- **Learn to follow group rules and instructions**, reinforcing discipline and structure.
- **Take on leadership roles**, such as directing a collaborative painting or organising materials.
- **Reinforce the importance of mutual respect and shared responsibility** by considering others' input.
- **Practice problem-solving and conflict resolution** when artistic disagreements arise.
- **Strengthen a sense of community** by engaging in meaningful, collective artistic expression.
- **Encourage cross-cultural appreciation** by integrating diverse artistic traditions and perspectives.

2.4.2 Examples of Group Art Activities That Build Relationships

1. **Mural Painting:**

-Each child contributes to a large-scale artwork, promoting **teamwork, patience, and compromise**.

2. **Sculpture-Building with Recycled Materials:**

-Encourages **collaborative problem-solving** while fostering environmental awareness.

3. **Storytelling Through Art:**

-Children create sequential drawings that together form a **visual story**, helping them develop **communication and narrative skills**.

4. **Collaborative Collage Making:**

-Children contribute different textures, colours, and images, **celebrating diversity and individual creativity** within a shared project.

By integrating cooperative art experiences into early childhood education, teachers can enhance peer relationships, cultivate a sense of belonging, and prepare children for future social interactions in both academic and real-world settings.

2.5 Conclusion

Social-emotional growth in early childhood serves as the foundation for a child's overall cognitive, emotional, and social development. The ability to understand oneself, interact positively with peers, form strong relationships with teachers, and engage in cooperative group activities is essential for healthy personal and academic growth. Art programs provide a unique and powerful avenue for fostering these crucial skills, allowing children to express themselves, build confidence, and navigate the complexities of social interactions in a supportive, creative environment.

The Role of Art in Social-Emotional Development

Through well-structured art activities, children develop self-concept and self-acceptance, recognising their individuality, strengths, and creative potential. As they engage in creative expression, they build a positive self-image, which is critical for fostering resilience, self-worth, and emotional regulation. A child who confidently paints a picture or sculpts a model is not just engaging in art but also strengthening their sense of identity and autonomy.

Peer interactions during art activities encourage communication, empathy, and cooperation. As children share materials, exchange ideas, and provide feedback on one another’s artwork, they learn to value different perspectives, develop social competence, and practice essential life skills such as negotiation, patience, and active listening. Group art projects mirror real-world collaboration, preparing children for future teamwork and social integration.

The Lasting Impact of Art on Teacher-Child and Group Relationships

The **te**acher-child relationship is another essential aspect of social-emotional growth that is nurtured through art education. Teachers act as mentors and facilitators,

guiding children through self-exploration and social learning while ensuring that every child feels heard, respected, and encouraged. A warm and supportive teacher-child relationship promotes emotional security, allowing children to explore creativity without fear of criticism or failure.

Likewise, group art activities promote a sense of community, leadership, and shared responsibility. When children collaborate on large-scale murals, storytelling projects, or sculpture-building tasks, they not only create art but also develop collective problem-solving skills and an understanding of how to function within a team. These experiences lay the groundwork for a child's ability to integrate into larger social environments, including school settings and later professional or community settings.

Laying the Foundation for Lifelong Social Skills

The early experiences gained through art education extend far beyond the classroom. By fostering self-confidence, interpersonal skills, and emotional expression, structured art programs provide children with the tools they need to navigate social relationships throughout life. A child who learns to express emotions through drawing, collaborate on a group project, or respect diverse artistic styles will be better equipped to face the challenges of adulthood, whether in education, the workplace, or social settings.

By integrating intentional and inclusive art programs into early childhood education, educators can nurture well-rounded individuals who are emotionally secure, socially competent, and prepared to engage meaningfully with the world around them. These early artistic and social experiences shape the foundation for lifelong learning, self-expression, and positive human connections.

UNIT 3: DEVELOPMENTAL LEVELS AND ART

3.1 Introduction

Children develop at different rates, both physically and cognitively, which influences their artistic expression. As they grow, changes in height, weight, motor skills, cognitive abilities, and emotional maturity impact how they create and interpret art. These factors influence the complexity, detail, and meaning behind their drawings, paintings, and other creative works.

A fundamental question in early childhood education is: Why do young children create art? Art is not merely a form of entertainment; it serves as a tool for self-expression, problem-solving, communication, and cognitive development. From the earliest scribbles to more detailed representations, children's artistic development follows recognisable patterns and stages, as identified by researchers in child psychology and art education.

Although children generally progress through similar artistic developmental stages, the pace and characteristics of their progress vary based on factors such as age, experience, cultural background, environmental influences, and individual interests. Understanding these developmental levels helps educators and caregivers provide age-appropriate artistic opportunities that nurture creativity, self-expression, and skill development.

This unit explores the stages of artistic development, examining how children’s drawing abilities evolve and how educators can support them at each stage. By recognizing the significance of these stages, teachers can create an inclusive and supportive art environment that encourages exploration, builds confidence, and fosters creativity in every child.

3.2 Developmental Levels/Stages of Art

As children progress through various stages of development, their artistic abilities evolve in parallel. These stages are referred to as developmental levels, which serve

as a framework for understanding what children can achieve in art at different points in their growth. While these levels provide general guidelines, it is important to note that some children may advance more quickly, while others may take longer to reach certain milestones. Developmental levels in art education help teachers recognize previous achievements and anticipate future progress in children's artwork. Since children exhibit diverse artistic abilities, understanding these stages enables educators to support each child according to their individual needs. Furthermore, transitions between stages are not always distinct, and considerable overlap is common.

For early childhood educators, three primary developmental levels are significant: the scribble stage, the basic forms or preschematic stage, and the pictorial or first drawings stage. Additionally, the realism stage emerges for children aged nine and older.

3.2.1 The Scribble Stage

The scribble stage typically begins when children are around 1.5 to 2 years old. At this stage, children explore mark-making as an early form of artistic expression. Given a crayon or marker, provided they no longer habitually put objects in their mouths, they will scribble on any available surface. Their initial marks often appear as unstructured lines made with various grips, including upside-down, sideways, or clenched between fingers. These early scribbles do not yet represent objects but are significant as a first step in artistic development. Children at this stage derive great enjoyment from the process itself rather than the final product. Through experimentation, they begin to develop fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and sensory awareness.

Early Scribble Stage: Disordered or Random Scribbling

Children lack control over their hand movements and the marks they create during the early scribble stage. Their scribbles are spontaneous and unstructured, moving in multiple directions depending on whether they are drawing on a floor or table surface. The way they hold the crayon also influences the appearance of their marks. At this point, children do not consciously control their scribbles or recognize that they are producing marks. They find satisfaction in the act of handling materials—dumping

crayons from a box, rolling them across a table, or grasping them in different ways—just as much as in the scribbling itself. Some children even use both hands simultaneously while making marks, sometimes accompanying their movements with vocalizations or rhythmic motions.

Later Scribble Stage: Controlled Scribbling

Approximately six months after first engaging in scribbling, children begin to recognize the connection between their hand movements and the marks that appear on paper. This stage is known as controlled scribbling. At this point, children develop greater control over their movements and begin to make more deliberate marks. Although the drawings may still resemble scribbles to adults, the child can now direct the movement of lines intentionally. Many children at this stage show enthusiasm for their ability to create purposeful marks, often producing lines, zigzags, or circular patterns. As they repeatedly practice these motions, they gain better control over specific movements, signaling the early stages of organized artistic expression.

The Scribble Stage and Two-Dimensional Media

Two-dimensional media refers to any form of artwork that exists on a flat surface, such as painting, drawing, printing, and scribbling. Since young children are still developing fine motor skills, they require safe, easy-to-hold tools. Large, non-toxic crayons are ideal for children between one and a half and three years old, as they allow for a secure grip. Pencils are generally unsuitable at this stage because they are more challenging to hold and pose a safety risk. High-quality kindergarten-grade crayons are the best option, preferably unwrapped for versatile use. Bright, vibrant colours enhance the child’s experience, making the process more enjoyable.

Children in the scribble stage benefit from large sheets of blank paper, which provide ample space for broad arm movements. White paper is often preferred, although offering paper in different shapes, such as rectangular, circular, or oval, can encourage exploration. Providing too many crayons at once may overwhelm or distract the child, so a limited selection is recommended. Painting is another valuable activity for this stage, as it allows for fluid, expressive movements. Paintbrushes suitable for two- and

three-year-olds should have approximately 30-centimetre handles and 3-centimetre bristles to facilitate ease of use.

Observing the Scribble Stage

When observing children in the scribble stage, the following points should be considered:

- **Age:** Children in this stage are typically between one and a half to three years old.
- **Motor Control:** Note how the child holds the crayon—whether with clenched fingers, a fist, or two fingers. A two-finger grip is an early sign of developing motor control.
- **Arm Movements:** Observe the type of arm movements used. Are they wide, short, long, or jabbing motions?
- **Types of Scribbles:** Identify whether the child produces controlled or uncontrolled scribbles, circular patterns, lines, or other forms.
- **Use of Paper:** Observe how the child interacts with the paper—whether they move across the page, focus on one area, or adjust the paper's position to alter their marks.

3.2.2 The Basic Forms/Preschematic Stage

As children develop greater muscle control and hand-eye coordination, they begin to recognise and create simple shapes. This stage, known as the basic forms or preschematic stage, usually occurs between the ages of three and four. At this point, children start producing recognisable forms such as circles, squares, and rectangles, emerging from their earlier scribbles. These shapes, known as emergent diagrammatic forms, represent a significant step in artistic development. Although they do not yet symbolise specific objects, these forms indicate an increasing level of intentionality in children's drawings.

Children gain greater control over their drawing tools during this stage, holding them more like adults do. They begin to create loops, circular patterns, and repeated lines. Many children take pride in their drawings at this stage, demonstrating an interest in

preserving their work by asking for their names to be written on it. They also show awareness of tool quality, preferring functional markers over dried-out ones.

Early Basic Forms: Circle and Oval

A circle or oval is the first identifiable basic form a child typically draws. This development marks the early basic forms stage, as children recognise these shapes within their previous scribbles and intentionally reproduce them. Children gradually experiment with adding details, such as dots or lines, to these early circular shapes. Another emerging form at this stage is the curved line or arc, which reflects improved motor control. Over time, these lines become more refined, leading to the ability to draw horizontal and vertical lines, crosses, and other basic diagrams.

Later Basic Forms: Rectangle and Square

As children's coordination improves, they begin to draw separate lines intentionally and join them to create rectangles and squares. This stage represents a more advanced level of control, as children can now deliberately construct shapes rather than relying on spontaneous movements.

The Basic Forms Stage and Two-Dimensional Media

Children can experiment with a wider variety of art materials at this stage. In addition to crayons, they may begin using tempera paint, which can be mixed to the desired consistency. Large lead pencils become more appropriate as the risk of injury decreases. A diverse selection of paper should be provided, ranging from newsprint to construction paper. Felt-tip pens and coloured markers are also excellent tools, as they offer clear, vibrant marks with minimal effort. Unlike in the scribble stage, children in this phase do not require the largest paper sizes, as their improved motor control allows them to work effectively on smaller surfaces.

Observing the Basic Forms Stage

When assessing children in the basic forms stage, consider the following:

- **Age:** Determine if the child falls within the expected age range or shows overlap between stages.
- **Motor Control:** Observe how the child holds drawing tools and whether they demonstrate confidence and precision.
- **Types of Basic Forms:** Record the shapes the child can produce and note their clarity.
- **Use of Paper:** Observe whether the child fills the page with multiple shapes or focuses on repeating a single form, indicating practice and refinement.

Understanding these developmental stages allows educators to foster artistic growth in young children, providing appropriate materials and encouragement tailored to each child's abilities.

3.2.3 The Pictorial/Schematic Stage

At this stage, children develop the ability to create marks that form their first recognisable pictures. Typically, children around four to five years old reach this level of artistic development. The term "schematic" refers to a child's capacity to develop and use a personal set of marks, or schemas, to represent objects and concepts in their drawings.

One of the most common symbols children create is the human figure. This is often represented as a "tadpole figure," with a circular head and extended lines for legs and arms. Other frequently drawn symbols include trees, houses, flowers, and animals. For example, trees and flowers are typically drawn using spiral scribbles or circular shapes combined with straight lines to represent trunks and stems. Houses, windows, doors, and flags are formed using simple rectangles and straight lines.

To support children at this stage, providing appropriate tools is essential. Materials such as thinner crayons, fine paintbrushes, and paints with controlled consistency allow children to develop greater precision and control in their artistic expressions. By the age of five, children begin selecting representational colours for their drawings,

making a variety of coloured crayons, markers, and paints necessary to enhance their creative process.

Children also start to develop a sense of ownership over their artwork. They may request adults to write the names of their drawings or even create stories to accompany them. Furthermore, they begin recognizing the artwork of their peers. Displaying their drawings in the classroom and allowing them to take some home fosters a sense of pride and accomplishment in their creative work.

Early Pictorial (First Drawing) Stage

In the early pictorial stage, children experiment with symbols by repeatedly drawing the same subject in different ways. They practice forming symbols, often filling entire sheets of paper with multiple versions of the same object. This repetition reflects a child's exploration of new ideas and their attempts to refine their representations. Symbols at this stage are dynamic and constantly evolving; what a child draws as a person one day may look entirely different the next. The variety of forms children create demonstrates their ability to assign meaning to their drawings, regardless of how accurately the shapes resemble real-world objects.

Later Pictorial (First Drawings) Stage

As children progress to the later pictorial stage, they develop greater control and consistency in their drawings. Their symbols become more refined and structured, and they take pride in producing clear, well-organised images. At this stage, children tend to arrange their symbols neatly on the page, often drawing them one at a time with minimal extraneous marks. By the age of five and a half to six, children can typically create images representing a wide range of objects from their experiences and imagination.

During this period, children rely on familiar symbols to construct more complex images. They also begin inventing new symbols as they encounter novel experiences. Each child develops a unique way of drawing objects such as human figures, houses, and other familiar items; this personal drawing style is known as a schema. By age six, a child's schema becomes recognisable and consistent, much like an individual's

signature. Once a child establishes a schema, their symbols become distinct markers of their artistic development.

Importance of Schema

A child's schema reflects their understanding and perception of the world around them. It is a cognitive framework that helps them organise and process their knowledge. Each child's schema is highly personal and represents elements of their environment that hold emotional significance. Through drawing, children externalise their thoughts and responses to their surroundings, providing valuable insight into their cognitive and emotional development.

Importance of First Drawings

First drawings serve as an essential bridge between children and their environment. Through artistic expression, children communicate their thoughts, emotions, and experiences. Drawing allows them to establish relationships with others, share personal stories, and express their individuality. Additionally, early drawings provide a window into a child's cognitive and perceptual development, reflecting their evolving understanding of the world.

Observations of the Pictorial (First Drawing) Stage

To assess and understand a child's progress during the pictorial stage, the following observations should be made:

- **Age:** Record the child's age to determine if their artistic development aligns with typical age-related milestones.
- **Combination of Basic Forms:** Observe how the child combines basic shapes to create figures. Simpler compositions suggest an earlier stage of development.
- **Size of Figures:** Note the relative sizes of objects in the drawing. Children often use exaggerated size to indicate importance, reflecting their personal experiences and emotions.
- **Number of Figures:** Count the number of figures present in the drawing. Fewer figures or a single figure may suggest that the child is earlier in the stage.

- **Details:** Identify the level of detail included in the drawing. An increase in details suggests progression through the stage.
- **Use of Figures:** Examine how the figures are placed on the page. If figures appear disconnected or scattered, the child may still explore basic forms and arrangements.
- **Naming Drawings:** Encourage children to talk about their drawings and name them independently. Naming their artwork is a significant step in developing communication and self-expression.

Educators and caregivers can foster creativity, cognitive development, and confidence in young learners by understanding and supporting children during the pictorial stage.

UNIT 4: PROGRAM BASICS: GOALS, SETTING UP, MATERIALS, AND STRATEGIES

4.1 Introduction

Art experiences play a crucial role in early childhood education, contributing to the holistic development of young learners. Engaging in creative activities helps children develop fine motor skills, cognitive abilities, emotional expression, and problem-solving skills. However, meaningful and developmentally appropriate creative experiences do not occur spontaneously; they require thoughtful planning and intentional implementation.

This unit explores the foundational elements necessary for designing and facilitating effective art experiences for young children. It focuses on three key areas:

1. **Program Goals** – Establishing clear and developmentally appropriate objectives ensures that art activities align with broader educational goals. Art should serve as a means of creative expression and support cognitive, social, and emotional growth. This section will examine how to set achievable and meaningful goals for an early childhood art program.
2. **Setting Up for Art Activities** – Art materials' physical environment and organisation significantly impact children's engagement and exploration. A well-structured art space should encourage creativity while ensuring safety and accessibility. This section will discuss strategies for setting up an art-friendly environment, including space organisation, appropriate furniture selection, and the teacher facilitation's role in fostering artistic expression.
3. **Using Basic Art Materials and Equipment** – Providing children with the right tools and materials is essential for fostering their creativity and self-expression. Different materials offer unique sensory and motor experiences, influencing how children experiment with colours, textures, and forms. This section will cover essential art supplies, how to introduce them to young learners, and strategies for encouraging open-ended exploration.

By carefully considering these three areas, educators can create a rich, stimulating environment where children feel confident expressing themselves through art. The unit

will provide practical strategies for integrating art into the early childhood curriculum, ensuring that creative activities are both engaging and educational.

4.2 Basic Goals of an Early Childhood Art Program

An early childhood art program plays a vital role in fostering children's overall development by allowing them to express their thoughts, ideas, emotions, and abilities through various artistic media and activities. Engaging in art promotes creativity, problem-solving skills, and sensory exploration, all of which are essential for young learners. Art experiences also contribute to language development, social interactions, and the enhancement of fine and gross motor skills.

To ensure that children fully benefit from artistic experiences, an effective early childhood art program should encourage exploration, creativity, and self-expression. Research highlights that young children thrive when they are free to experiment with materials and techniques without rigid expectations (Eckhoff, 2011). Therefore, the emphasis should be placed on providing a supportive environment where children can explore different artistic processes at their own pace.

This section discusses the fundamental goals of an early childhood art program, focusing on five key aspects: (1) process over product, (2) addressing children’s developmental needs, (3) encouraging originality and independence, (4) fostering creative thinking, and (5) supporting individualised progress.

4.2.1 Process, Not Product

A key principle in early childhood art education is prioritising the process of artistic creation over the final product. The main objective of art activities should not be to produce a perfect or standardised outcome but rather to allow children to explore materials, experiment with different techniques, and express themselves freely. Research indicates that children engage more deeply in activities when they are encouraged to experiment rather than conform to rigid artistic expectations (Thompson & Bales, 2020).

Young children, especially those in preschool and early elementary years, are still developing their fine motor coordination. They benefit significantly from activities that encourage free expression, such as finger painting, drawing, or clay modelling, rather than projects that require precise control or replication of a specific model (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987). In contrast, older children may begin to set artistic goals and work towards more refined creations, but they should still be encouraged to explore rather than focus solely on perfection.

By shifting the emphasis from the final artwork to the experience of creating, children develop confidence in their abilities, enjoy the creative process, and cultivate a lifelong appreciation for artistic expression.

4.2.2 Addressing the Needs of the Children

An effective early childhood art program must be developmentally appropriate and tailored to young learners' interests, abilities, and needs. The selection of materials and activities should align with children's age and skill levels, ensuring that they can engage with them safely and independently (Gandini, 2012).

In a mixed-age classroom, educators should provide a variety of materials that cater to different levels of fine motor development. For instance, toddlers may prefer using thick crayons and large brushes, while older preschoolers may enjoy using scissors, glue, and smaller drawing tools.

Art activities should recognise the diversity of children's learning styles and multiple intelligences. Gardner’s (2011) theory of multiple intelligences suggests that children express creativity in different ways; some may enjoy painting, others sculpting, and others might engage in storytelling through drawing. By offering a range of artistic experiences, educators ensure that all children can participate in ways that align with their unique strengths and interests.

4.2.3 Encouraging Originality and Independence

Creativity flourishes when children are given the freedom to explore, experiment, and express their unique ideas without strict guidelines or predefined models. Encouraging

originality in art activities allows children to develop problem-solving skills and confidence in their decision-making.

According to Vygotsky (1978), creativity is fostered when children are provided with open-ended opportunities to explore independently. Instead of instructing children to replicate a specific drawing or craft, educators should encourage them to create their own interpretations. Providing templates or examples of finished products can inadvertently limit a child's imagination, leading them to feel pressured to conform rather than explore their own ideas.

Allowing children to manage their own materials, such as choosing their colours, mixing paints, or deciding which medium to use, fosters a sense of autonomy. Older children can be encouraged to be responsible for setting up and cleaning their art spaces, further reinforcing their independence and ownership of their creative work.

4.2.4 Fostering Creative Thinking

An early childhood art program should cultivate creative thinking by providing children with opportunities for open-ended exploration, risk-taking, and innovation. Creativity is not just about artistic expression but also about developing cognitive flexibility, which is essential for problem-solving in various aspects of life (Runco, 2014).

When children engage in artistic activities, they learn to think critically, make decisions, and adapt to new challenges. For example, when mixing colours, they experiment with combinations and observe the outcomes, reinforcing early scientific thinking. Similarly, when constructing a collage, they make choices about layering and composition, refining their decision-making skills.

Because children have diverse learning preferences and abilities, an art program should include activities that cater to different forms of creative expression. Storytelling through drawing, improvisational painting, and three-dimensional art (e.g., clay modeling, paper sculpture) allow children to explore multiple ways of thinking and expressing themselves.

By encouraging risk-taking and exploration, educators help children develop confidence in their creative abilities, setting the foundation for lifelong innovation and adaptability.

4.2.5 Supporting Individualized Progress

Every child develops at their own pace, and an effective art program should accommodate individual differences in artistic growth and skill development. Some children naturally gravitate towards drawing, while others prefer sensory activities such as finger painting or clay sculpting. Providing a variety of materials and experiences ensures that children can engage in artistic exploration based on their own interests and abilities (Eisner, 2002).

Instead of enforcing a rigid structure, teachers should create an environment where children feel comfortable experimenting without fear of making mistakes. For example, rather than requiring all children to follow a step-by-step painting process, they should be free to explore painting in their own unique ways, whether through brush strokes, finger painting, or colour mixing.

Individualised progress also allows children to revisit and refine their work overtime. Young artists should be encouraged to reflect on their creative choices, modify their projects, and experiment with different techniques. This approach not only strengthens artistic skills but also fosters persistence and resilience.

By supporting personalised artistic exploration, educators create an inclusive and enriching environment where every child feels valued and capable of creative self-expression.

The goals of an early childhood art program extend beyond producing artwork; they encompass fostering creativity, independence, and cognitive growth. Educators can create an enriching and developmentally appropriate art program by focusing on the process over the product, addressing children’s individual needs, encouraging originality and independence, promoting creative thinking, and supporting individualised progress.

Art activities should provide a safe, open-ended, and engaging space where children can experiment freely, take risks, and express their emotions and ideas. When thoughtfully designed, an early childhood art program can be a powerful tool for enhancing creativity, confidence, and lifelong learning in young children.

4.3 Setting Up for Art Activities – Specific Ages

Art activities should be planned with careful consideration of children's developmental stages, ensuring that materials and tasks are age-appropriate, engaging, and supportive of their motor, cognitive, and creative growth. Each age group has distinct needs and abilities, requiring tailored approaches to encourage meaningful artistic experiences.

4.3.1 Planning Art Activities for Toddlers

Toddlers (ages 1-2 years) are naturally curious and benefit from well-defined spaces encouraging movement and exploration. They engage with art primarily through sensory experiences, making it important to provide safe, non-toxic, and easy-to-handle materials. The focus should be on process-oriented activities rather than structured art projects.

Key Considerations for Toddler Art Activities:

- **Safety:** Materials should be sturdy, large, and free of small parts to prevent choking hazards.
- **Sensory Exploration:** Activities should engage multiple senses, helping toddlers explore textures, colours, and shapes.
- **Repetition and Routine:** Repeating familiar activities strengthens motor skills and builds confidence.
- **Minimal Instructions:** Toddlers learn best through direct engagement rather than verbal explanations.

Suggested Art Activities for Toddlers:

- **Finger Painting:** Engages touch, sight, and creativity while developing hand-eye coordination.
- **Playdough and Clay Exploration:** Enhances fine motor development and provides a tactile experience.
- **Chunky Crayons and Large Paper:** Encourages spontaneous mark-making and basic control over hand movements.
- **Sponge Stamping:** Introduces basic printing techniques while fostering curiosity about textures.

(Gandini, 2012)

4.3.2 Art Activities for Young Preschoolers (Ages 2-4 Years)

Young preschoolers (ages 2-4) have short attention spans, so art activities should be engaging yet flexible. Open-ended activities allow children to explore materials in their own ways without rigid expectations. At this stage, children begin to develop basic artistic preferences and early fine-motor coordination.

Key Considerations for Young Preschoolers:

- **Short, Engaging Sessions:** Activities should last 10-15 minutes, accommodating their attention span.
- **Exploratory Approach:** Encouraging freedom to experiment fosters creativity.
- **Introduction of Tools:** Children can begin using larger brushes, rollers, and printing objects.
- **Simple Choices:** Offering a limited selection of materials prevents overwhelm and encourages focus.

Suggested Art Activities for Young Preschoolers:

- **Painting:** Encourages sensory exploration and fine motor development. Finger painting is particularly beneficial (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987).
- **Printing:** Using objects like sponges, vegetables, or sticks dipped in paint helps children understand cause and effect.
- **Crayons and Chalk:** Thick crayons or sidewalk chalk are easier for small hands to hold and use.

- **Tear-and-Paste Collage:** Strengthens finger dexterity while allowing for open-ended creation.

4.4 Art Activities for Older Preschoolers and Kindergarteners (Ages 4-6 Years)

Older preschoolers and kindergarteners (ages 4-6) develop greater control over their motor skills and demonstrate increased creativity. Their artwork becomes more purposeful and detailed, underscoring the importance of providing structured yet flexible opportunities for expression.

Key Considerations for Older Preschoolers:

- **Fine Motor Skill Development:** Activities should encourage scissor use, brush control, and drawing precision.
- **Introduction of Basic Techniques:** Children can explore folding, cutting, and layering.
- **Encouragement of Storytelling through Art:** They can begin to represent familiar objects and people in their drawings.
- **Longer Engagement:** They can focus on art activities for 20-30 minutes.

Suggested Art Activities for Older Preschoolers:

- **Scissor Crafts:** Cutting and assembling shapes to create collages enhances **hand control**.
- **Structured Painting Activities:** Using brushes, rollers, and stencils provides greater control.
- **Clay Modelling:** Engages three-dimensional thinking and fine motor refinement.
- **Guided Drawing Activities:** Simple prompts help children visualise and create their own scenes.

(Eisner, 2002)

4.5 Supporting Children with Developmental Delays

Children with developmental delays may require additional time, repetition, and guidance to develop artistic skills. Open-ended, process-focused activities are particularly effective in helping them gain confidence and coordination.

Key Considerations for Children with Developmental Delays:

- **Repetition and Routine:** Repeated exposure helps reinforce motor skills and confidence.
- **Simplified Instructions:** Breaking down activities into smaller, manageable steps aids comprehension.
- **Guided Assistance: Hand-over-hand support** can help children refine their motor skills.
- **Encouraging Self-Expression:** Art should serve as a non-verbal communication tool for children who struggle with speech.

Suggested Art Activities for Children with Developmental Delays:

- **Texture Exploration:** Using fabric scraps, textured paper, and sandpaper for tactile stimulation.
- **Hand-Over-Hand Painting:** Assisting children in controlling brush strokes.
- **Large-Scale Art:** Using big paper and broad movements helps develop gross motor control.
- **Simple Mosaics:** Arranging and glueing pre-cut shapes to develop spatial awareness.

(Runco, 2014)

4.6 Supporting Children with Physical Impairments

Children with physical impairments may need modifications to fully participate in art activities. Adapted tools and workspace accommodations can make activities more accessible.

Key Considerations for Children with Physical Impairments:

- **Stabilizing Materials:** Taping paper to the table or using weighted tools provides greater control.
- **Modified Art Tools:** Tools with larger grips, adapted scissors, and ergonomic paintbrushes assist with dexterity challenges.
- **Adjustable Workstations:** Tables at the correct height or tilted surfaces improve accessibility.
- **Alternative Art Mediums:** Using thicker paints, modeling clay, or sponge brushes enhances ease of use.

Suggested Art Activities for Children with Physical Impairments:

- **Sponge and Stamp Painting:** Requires minimal grip strength.
- **Adaptive Brush Holders:** Enables independent painting.
- **Textured Collages:** Using fabric, yarn, and sand creates accessible tactile experiences.

(Gandini, 2012)

4.7 Supporting Children with Visual Impairments

Children with visual impairments benefit from tactile and sensory-rich art activities. Providing raised textures, verbal guidance, and adaptive tools can enhance their participation.

Key Considerations for Children with Visual Impairments:

- **Tactile Exploration:** Raised surfaces and textured materials help children engage with art through touch.
- **Verbal Descriptions:** Explaining materials, colours, and movements fosters **understanding**.
- **Adaptive Drawing Tools:** Raised-line drawing kits and puff paint allow children to feel their artwork.

Suggested Art Activities for Children with Visual Impairments:

- **Raised-Line Drawing:** Using string, glue, or textured paint to create tactile outlines.
- **Clay and Sculpture Work:** Provides three-dimensional creative expression.
- **Multi-Sensory Art:** Combining scented paints, textured paper, and audio cues for deeper engagement.

(Thompson & Bales, 2020)

By tailoring art activities to the specific needs of different age groups and abilities, educators can create inclusive and enriching artistic experiences that foster creativity, confidence, and developmental growth.

UNIT 5: TWO-DIMENSIONAL ACTIVITIES

5.1 Introduction

Two-dimensional (2-D) shapes are flat figures that have only two dimensions: length and width, but no depth (Van de Walle et al., 2019). These shapes include circles, squares, triangles, rectangles, and other polygons that are fundamental in early childhood education. Understanding and recognizing these shapes form the basis of visual perception and spatial awareness, skills that are essential for later mathematical and artistic development.

Children naturally encounter 2-D shapes in their environment, from books and puzzles to everyday objects such as signs, plates, and windows. Engaging in two-dimensional activities such as drawing, painting, collage-making, and printmaking allows children to explore shapes creatively while strengthening their fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and problem-solving abilities (Goswami, 2020).

Additionally, exposure to 2-D activities fosters early mathematical reasoning as children learn to differentiate shapes, understand symmetry, and develop spatial orientation (Clements & Sarama, 2021). These activities encourage creativity, self-expression, and confidence in using a variety of art tools. By incorporating 2-D activities into early learning programs, educators help children build a strong foundation for both artistic and mathematical literacy, ensuring a well-rounded developmental experience.

5.2 Picture Making/Drawing

Picture making or drawing is a fundamental form of visual expression that begins with simple scribbling and evolves into more structured depictions (Kellogg, 1970). Young children engage in drawing as a means of storytelling, self-expression, and exploration. This creative process enhances their cognitive abilities, hand-eye coordination, and fine motor skills while fostering imaginative thinking (Malchiodi, 2020).

Teachers play a crucial role in nurturing children’s artistic expression by providing opportunities to explore different materials, encouraging open-ended creativity, and

guiding them in reflecting on their experiences through art (Edwards, 2022). Interactive activities such as storytelling, singing, and outdoor observations can serve as inspiration for picture-making activities, helping children connect their artwork to real-life experiences.

Common drawing materials include:

- **Crayons:** Easy to grip and allow for colour layering and shading.
- **Coloured Pencils:** Enable more controlled and detailed drawings.
- **Chalk:** Ideal for large-scale, expressive drawings on sidewalks or chalkboards.
- **Markers:** Vibrant and versatile for both free drawing and structured activities.

By offering a variety of tools and surfaces (paper, cardboard, fabric, and textured boards), children can explore different techniques and develop confidence in their artistic abilities.

5.2.1 Painting with a Brush

Painting allows children to explore colours, textures, and brush movements, fostering both creativity and fine motor development (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987). Painting also encourages children to experiment with different tools and techniques, refining their artistic skills over time.

Types of Paint and Their Uses:

- **Watercolours:** Light and translucent, ideal for colour mixing and layering.
- **Acrylics:** More opaque and versatile for different surfaces.
- **Tempera Paints:** Washable and commonly used for classroom activities.
- **Finger Paints:** Provide a sensory experience and help with tactile exploration.

Guided Painting Techniques:

- **Brush Strokes:** Introduce children to vertical, horizontal, circular, and dabbing techniques.
- **Blending Colours:** Encourage experimenting with primary colours to create secondary colours.

- **Texture Exploration:** Use sponges, cotton swabs, or even leaves to create interesting effects.
- **Layering:** Teach children how to layer light and dark shades to add depth to their paintings.

5.2.2 More Painting Hints

To enhance children's painting experiences and ensure a structured learning environment, educators can apply the following strategies:

- Thickening paint with liquid starch reduces dripping and makes it easier to control (McArdle & Wright, 2014).
- Adding scents like mint or vanilla to paint enhances sensory engagement.
- Creating individual portfolios allows children to track their progress and reflect on their creative growth.
- Using oversized paper encourages large motor movements and free expression.
- Displaying children’s artwork in the classroom validates their efforts and boosts self-esteem.

5.2.3 Crayons

Crayons are one of the most accessible and versatile art tools for young learners. They allow children to experiment with colours, textures, and shading on various surfaces, including paper, cardboard, and fabric (Gaitskell & Hurwitz, 1975).

Techniques for Crayon Use:

- **Layering:** Encourages colour blending and depth.
- **Stippling:** Small dots create texture and shading.
- **Rubbing:** Placing paper over textured surfaces and rubbing with crayons to create imprints.
- **Sgraffito:** Scratching through layers of crayon to reveal different colours underneath.

By providing different types of crayons, such as thick crayons for younger children and fine-point crayons for detailed work, educators can support the progression of children's drawing skills (Cox, 2016).

5.2.4 Pasting and Torn Paper Art

Adhesive-based activities such as pasting, collage-making, and torn paper art are essential for developing children's fine motor skills and creativity (Wilson, 2004). These activities enhance problem-solving skills by encouraging children to arrange and compose artwork using various materials (Kindler, 1997).

Materials for Pasting and Torn Paper Art:

- Coloured construction paper
- Magazines and newspapers
- Glue sticks and paste
- Tissue paper and foil
- Fabric scraps and yarn

Suggested Projects:

- **Paper Collage:** Children create scenes using cut-out shapes.
- **Mosaics:** Small paper squares are arranged to form patterns.
- **Mixed-Media Artwork:** Combines different textures such as fabric, string, and foil.

Educators should encourage children to tear paper by hand rather than using scissors, as this helps develop finger strength and dexterity.

5.2.5 Murals

Murals are large-scale collaborative artworks that allow children to work together, fostering teamwork and communication skills. They encourage self-expression and storytelling, often reflecting children's personal experiences and community themes (Kindler, 1997).

Steps to Creating a Mural:

1. **Choose a Theme:** Nature, seasons, family, or cultural traditions.
2. **Select Materials:** Paint, crayons, markers, or cut-paper elements.
3. **Encourage Collaboration:** Assign sections of the mural to different groups.
4. **Discuss the Process:** Ask children about their contributions and thoughts on the final artwork.

Murals provide a sense of accomplishment and are a great way to showcase children's creativity in the classroom or community spaces (Eckhoff, 2008).

5.3 Printmaking

Printmaking introduces children to the concepts of pattern, repetition, and texture exploration. It strengthens fine motor skills and provides an introduction to basic artistic processes through hands-on experimentation (Gude, 2004).

Techniques for Printmaking:

- **Found Object Printing:** Uses everyday items such as bottle caps, buttons, and leaves to create patterns (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004).
- **Fingerprinting:** Encourages sensory engagement and pattern recognition (Eisner, 2002).
- **Texture Prints:** Materials like sandpaper and lace create raised textures (Gaitskell & Hurwitz, 1975).
- **Monoprinting:** Involves pressing a second sheet over wet paint to create mirrored images (Golomb, 2011).
- **Styrofoam Prints:** Children engrave designs into Styrofoam and use ink or paint for printing (McArdle & Wright, 2014).

Benefits of Printmaking:

- Encourages experimentation with textures and layering.
- Strengthens children’s understanding of patterns and symmetry.
- Enhances problem-solving skills by allowing children to anticipate and plan compositions.

Through these two-dimensional activities, children develop essential artistic skills while enhancing self-expression, creativity, and cognitive development. These activities provide foundational knowledge of artistic techniques, helping young learners appreciate visual arts and explore diverse mediums. Educators can support holistic growth by incorporating these methods into early childhood education, fostering confidence and a lifelong appreciation for artistic expression.

UNIT 6: THREE-DIMENSIONAL ACTIVITIES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Three-dimensional (3D) art refers to artistic forms that possess depth, height, and width, allowing viewers to engage with them from multiple perspectives (Koster, 2022). Unlike two-dimensional art, which is limited to a flat surface, three-dimensional activities involve manipulation, construction, and spatial awareness. These activities include modelling with clay, working with play-dough, creating paper-based sculptures, and engaging in woodworking.

The tactile engagement provided by 3D art promotes sensory development, allowing children to experience textures and forms through touch (Kolbe, 2021). The ability to mould, shape, and assemble different materials strengthens their understanding of form, weight, and structure. This hands-on interaction enhances their fine and gross motor skills, as well as their coordination and dexterity (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 2020).

Working with three-dimensional materials fosters developmental growth across multiple domains, including physical, cognitive, and linguistic skills:

- **Physical Development:** Through activities such as rolling, shaping, pinching, and assembling objects, children refine their fine motor skills. These activities require controlled hand movements, improving dexterity and precision. Larger-scale projects, such as creating sculptures from recycled materials or stacking blocks, help develop gross motor skills. Hand-eye coordination is strengthened as children manipulate materials to achieve specific artistic outcomes (Gandini, 2022).
- **Cognitive Development:** Three-dimensional activities stimulate problem-solving skills, creativity, and spatial awareness. When children build structures or model figures, they experiment with balance, proportion, and composition. These activities encourage critical thinking, as children must plan their designs, make adjustments, and evaluate their progress. Additionally, exposure to basic engineering and architectural principles enhances their understanding of shapes, symmetry, and stability (Kolbe, 2021).

- **Linguistic Development:** As children engage in 3D activities, they develop new vocabulary related to the materials, techniques, and artistic processes they are using. Teachers and caregivers can facilitate language development by encouraging children to describe their creations, explain their thought processes, and engage in storytelling based on their sculptures. Group projects also promote collaborative communication skills, as children discuss and share ideas with peers (Edwards, 2019).

Engaging in three-dimensional art fosters self-confidence and emotional expression. The process of creating tangible objects gives children a sense of accomplishment, allowing them to take pride in their work. By experimenting with different materials and techniques, they develop a sense of control over their artistic expressions, building resilience and perseverance when faced with challenges (Gandini, 2022).

In early childhood education, three-dimensional activities provide a foundation for artistic exploration by allowing children to engage with a variety of textures, materials, and construction methods. These activities not only develop creativity but also contribute to holistic learning experiences that support fine and gross motor development, cognitive skills, language acquisition, and social interaction.

6.2 DEVELOPMENTAL LEVELS AND THREE-DIMENSIONAL MEDIA

Children's engagement with three-dimensional media evolves through various developmental stages, reflecting their cognitive, motor, and creative growth (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 2020). Understanding these stages helps educators design appropriate activities that support artistic progression and developmental milestones.

STAGES OF 3-D MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Random Manipulation (Exploratory Stage):

At this initial stage, typically observed in toddlers and younger preschoolers, children engage with three-dimensional materials through sensory exploration rather than intentional creation. They squeeze, pound, tear, and press materials such as clay or play-dough, discovering their texture and flexibility. This phase mirrors the early

scribbling stage in two-dimensional art, where children focus on the experience rather than the outcome.

- **Patting, Rolling, and Making Shapes:**
  As children's **fine motor control improves**, they begin to manipulate materials with greater purpose. They may start rolling clay into ropes or balls, flattening pieces with their hands, or pinching small sections to create basic forms. This stage represents the transition from random manipulation to intentional creativity, where children develop greater coordination and dexterity.
- **Creating Circles and Rectangles:**
  At this stage, children gain more precision and control, enabling them to form recognizable geometric shapes. Circles often appear first, followed by rectangles and other angular forms. This phase signifies a deeper understanding of **spatial relationships** and material manipulation, preparing children for more complex artistic compositions.
- **Forming Clay Figures and Objects:**
  Around ages four to five, children begin assembling basic shapes to construct recognisable objects and figures. They may combine spheres and elongated forms to create people, animals, or simple objects, reflecting their growing cognitive and representational abilities. These creations often tell a story, revealing children's expanding imagination and conceptual thinking.
- **Development of Schema:**
  As children gain experience, they develop personalised artistic methods, constructing figures and objects using their preferred techniques. At this stage, they also begin integrating additional materials, such as beads, feathers, buttons, or fabric, to enhance the texture and depth of their creations. Their ability to represent ideas through three-dimensional art solidifies, allowing for greater storytelling and artistic expression (Kolbe, 2021).

6.3 MODELING

Definition and Importance

Modelling is the creation of miniature three-dimensional representations using pliable materials such as clay, wax, salt dough, or papier-mâché. This practice strengthens tactile perception, adaptability, and spatial reasoning, helping children understand form, proportion, and texture (Gandini, 2022). Modelling also supports motor skill development, as children refine their dexterity by shaping, moulding, and assembling different elements.

Materials for Modelling

- **Clay:** A versatile and responsive material that allows for detailed sculpting and textural exploration. Air-dry and oven-bake clay options provide flexibility for various projects.
- **Play Dough & Salt Clay:** Soft and easy to manipulate, these materials are ideal for early learners developing hand strength and fine motor control.
- **Papier-Mâché:** Available in pulp or strip form, papier-mâché offers durability and flexibility, making it suitable for sculpting larger projects.

Encouraging the Use of Modeling Materials

- Emphasise the process rather than the final product to encourage creativity.
- Introduce diverse tools such as rolling pins, stamps, and texture plates to expand artistic exploration.
- Encourage persistence and experimentation at all developmental stages.
- Provide demonstrations to introduce new techniques while allowing children to explore independently (Kolbe, 2021).

6.4 THE VALUE OF CLAY

Clay provides children with endless opportunities for creative expression, unrestricted by predefined shapes or sizes. Unlike two-dimensional media, clay's pliable nature allows children to engage in rich, sensory-manipulative experiences that contribute to multiple aspects of development:

- **Fine Motor Development:** The actions of squeezing, rolling, pinching, and pulling help refine finger strength, coordination, and dexterity (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 2020).

- **Cognitive Growth:** Working with clay encourages problem-solving, spatial awareness, and critical thinking as children conceptualise and create their designs.
- Social and Emotional Benefits: Clay fosters self-expression and confidence as children create unique pieces that reflect their ideas and emotions.

Additionally, play dough, made from simple household ingredients (water, flour, and salt), serves as a cost-effective alternative to clay, with the added benefit of customizable colours and scents.

6.5 STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH CLAY

To maximise the benefits of clay activities in early learning environments, educators should implement the following strategies:

- Position workstations away from high-traffic areas to minimise disruptions.
- Ensure ample space for children to work comfortably without overcrowding.
- Provide individual portions of clay to allow for independent exploration.
- Engage in clay activities alongside children to model techniques and inspire creativity.
- Store clay properly in airtight containers to maintain its usability for future sessions (Koster, 2022).

6.6 ASSEMBLAGE

Definition and Benefits

Assemblage involves combining multiple three-dimensional objects, both natural and man-made, to create unified artistic compositions. This technique fosters innovation and sustainability as children repurpose discarded materials to construct meaningful works of art (Gandini, 2022).

Encouraging Assemblage Activities

- Encourage children to collect objects from their environment that hold personal significance.

- Demonstrate methods for arranging and combining objects based on themes, textures, and colours.
- Introduce mounting boards and adhesives such as glue, tape, and staples to enhance construction.
- Allow children to experiment with layouts, rearranging elements to refine their compositions (Edwards, 2019).

Materials for Assemblage

- **Containers:** Wooden boxes, cardboard boxes, matchboxes, egg cartons.
- **Objects:** Driftwood, corks, fabric scraps, recycled toys, natural elements.
- **Adhesives:** Glue, tape, staples, nails.
- **Tools:** Scissors, staplers, pliers, hammers.

6.7 CARDBOARD CONSTRUCTION

Importance of Cardboard Construction

Cardboard construction stimulates creativity by transforming everyday materials into complex three-dimensional structures. It promotes problem-solving, engineering concepts, and environmental awareness by encouraging children to reuse and repurpose materials (Kolbe, 2021).

Encouraging Cardboard Construction

- Provide a variety of cardboard materials, including milk cartons, paper tubes, and corrugated cardboard.
- Incorporate recycled materials to promote environmental sustainability.
- Offer tools such as glue, tape, and scissors to support independent construction.
- Allow children to explore cutting, folding, layering, and stacking to create unique structures (Koster, 2022).

6.8 CONCLUSION

Three-dimensional art activities are powerful tools for fostering creativity, enhancing fine motor skills, and supporting cognitive development. Children gain an enriched understanding of texture, form, and spatial relationships by engaging with materials such as clay, assemblage objects, and cardboard.

Providing a process-focused environment encourages young learners to develop problem-solving abilities, artistic confidence, and an appreciation for the creative potential of everyday materials. Through hands-on experiences, children cultivate imaginative thinking, resilience, and collaboration skills, which are essential for lifelong artistic and cognitive growth (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 2020; Kolbe, 2021).

UNIT 7: CONCLUSIONS

The *Art for Young Children (EAT4541)* module has provided a comprehensive exploration of the crucial role of art in early childhood development. Through an in-depth study of both theoretical and practical aspects, you have gained valuable insights into how art fosters young children's cognitive, social-emotional, and physical growth. The knowledge and skills acquired in this module will enable you, as future educators, to design and implement effective art programs that enrich children's learning experiences.

7.1 Art and the Development of the Young Child

The first section of the module emphasized how art supports holistic child development:

- **Art and Physical-Mental Growth** highlighted the significance of artistic activities in developing fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and cognitive abilities. Through engaging in creative tasks such as drawing, painting, and sculpting, children refine their motor skills while also enhancing their problem-solving and critical-thinking abilities.
- **Art and Social-Emotional Growth** explored how art serves as a medium for self-expression and emotional regulation. It fosters confidence, encourages peer collaboration, and provides a safe space for children to express their feelings. As future teachers, you will be able to use art to support children’s social development and emotional well-being.
- **Developmental Levels and Art** examined the stages of artistic growth in young children, from scribbling to representational drawing. Understanding these developmental stages allows educators to provide age-appropriate artistic experiences, ensuring that activities align with children's abilities and interests.

7.2 The Early Childhood Art Program

The second section of the module focused on the practical implementation of an early childhood art program:

- **Program Basics** introduced essential considerations in setting up an engaging and inclusive art environment. You learned about selecting suitable materials, organising an inspiring, creative space, and employing effective teaching strategies that support diverse learners.
- **Two-Dimensional Activities** provided hands-on techniques for integrating drawing, painting, and collage-making into the curriculum. These activities help children explore colours, textures, and composition while developing their creative expression.
- **Three-Dimensional Activities** delved into sculpture, clay modelling, and other tactile experiences that enhance children's spatial awareness, sensory exploration, and problem-solving skills. These activities encourage hands-on engagement, allowing children to manipulate materials and develop an appreciation for three-dimensional forms.

7.3 Final Thoughts

By completing this module, you have developed a strong foundation in both the theory and practice of art education for young children. You are now equipped with the tools to create meaningful, developmentally appropriate art experiences that foster creativity, imagination, and holistic growth in early learners. As you move forward in your teaching journey, remember that art is not only a subject but also a powerful vehicle for learning, exploration, and self-discovery. By integrating art into early childhood education, you will inspire young minds, nurture their creative potential, and contribute to their overall development in a meaningful way.

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